



CHAPTER 2

PART 1 CONCEPTS



WARFIGHTING CONCEPTS

The Marine Corps has worked to develop partnerships with the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard to produce products of a singular vision that ultimately support the National Defense Strategy. The resulting seminal documents, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, *Naval Operations Concept 2006* (NOC), and the *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment* (MOC), provide a central strategic direction for the development of naval forces supported by a series of supporting and emerging concepts that include joint seabasing, counterinsurgency operations, small unit leader and individual development guides. This hierarchy of operational concepts enables the Marine Corps to effectively respond to a rapidly changing security environment by exploiting the nation's asymmetric advantages in sea control.

SEMINAL CONCEPTS

A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower articulates the unified maritime strategy of America's Sea Services—the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Published on 17 October 2007, it “stresses an approach that integrates seapower with the other elements of national power, as well as those of our friends and allies, to

protect our way of life and sustain the global, interconnected system through which we prosper.” In addition to protecting the homeland and winning our Nation’s wars, the strategy declares that the sea services must enhance “our ability to prevent war, win the long struggle against terrorist networks, positively influence events, and ease the impact of disasters.”

The maritime strategy calls for a more integrated approach to how maritime forces are employed in order to meet the needs of the combatant commanders. It notes that “Marines will continue to be employed as air-ground task forces operating from amphibious ships to conduct a variety of missions, such as power projection, but they will also be employed as detachments aboard a wider variety of ships and cutters for maritime security missions. Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen teamed in various combinations of security forces, mobile training teams, construction battalions, health services, law enforcement, and civil affairs units to conduct security cooperation and humanitarian assistance missions, illustrate adaptive force packaging.”

The *Naval Operations Concept 2006 (NOC)* elaborates further on the idea of increasing the capability and capacity of the Navy and Marine Corps for an expanded range of missions by adaptively task organizing current and emerging forces into closely integrated packages tailored to meet the varied and competing demands of the combatant commanders. Toward that end, the NOC provides guid-

ing naval principles, a common outlook and approach, and methods for promoting greater organizational and operational flexibility.



Coupled with the *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* and the NOC, *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment (MOC)* builds upon our conceptual foundation for littoral power projection provided by the *Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS)* concept published in the 1990s. Recent history has proven many of the ideas espoused in the OMFTS family, such as the “three-block war,” remarkably insightful.

The MOC represents an evolution of, vice departure from, OMFTS based on lessons earned through innovation and experimentation, our understanding of the post-9/11 security environment, revised national strategy documents, and recent operational experience. The MOC highlights OMFTS and two other operational concepts, *Seabasing* and *Distributed Operations*, as critical to successful imple-

mentation of the operating concepts it puts forth.

The Seabasing concept is key to the integration of joint forces and forms the centerpiece for projecting and sustaining military force in support of national policy. It assures joint access by leveraging the operational maneuver of sovereign, distributed and networked forces operating globally from the sea.

The MOC describes how Marine Corps forces must be organized, based, trained, and equipped for effective employment across the full range of strategic challenges from traditional to non-traditional.

The maritime strategy, NOC and MOC together call for more widely distributed forces providing increased forward presence, security cooperation with an expanding set of international partners, prevention or preemption of non-traditional threats, and a global response to crisis in spite of challenges to access, without forfeiting our ability to conduct forcible entry and combat operations. Collectively, these documents provide a comprehensive and unified direction for our capability development efforts.

SUPPORTING CONCEPTS

Countering Irregular Threats, published in June 2006, is focused above the company level and is the Marine Corps' foundational document for multi-service, joint, and multi-agency partnerships in a counterinsurgency environment.

Functional Fitness, published in November 2006, espouses the idea that operations in a complex and uncertain environment heighten the need for an institutionalized combat conditioning program. This concept lays out the tenants for a program that improves general



physical conditioning by treating Marines like athletes, prepares Marines for the physical actions and rigors of combat and for the effects of wearing of combat equipment continuously, and provides injury proofing and exercises that speed recovery time through active recovery methods.

Interagency Campaign Design, published in July 2007, develops an initial understanding of the need for holistic government solutions in complex operating environments. It indicates that some branches of the U.S. Government may be better suited to deal with challenges and develop more thorough solutions than the military. Whether these areas are infrastructure development or diplomacy, this concept is intended to help leaders understand how to engage in interagency campaign problem solving and explore operational learning. Moreover, it stresses the need for a common vocabulary, necessary for developing a successful inter-agency effort.

Tactical Perception, published in July 2007, espouses that all Marines must have an appreciation for the role they play in shaping perception in a war among the people. Additionally, it states that Marines must develop understanding to guide their actions across a broad spectrum of areas to include society, culture, religions, politics and economics. It also explains how generating favorable perceptions of our efforts comes from the integration of the message communicated by the day-to-day tactical actions of Marines, technical information operations, employment of over-arching themes and the strategic communications plan.

Combat Stress, published in July 2007, talks to many of the key issues currently affecting Marines at all levels. Moreover, this guide gives leaders tips and signs for both prevention and treatment. This concept was written to be a discus-

sion and teaching tool for Marines of all grades, and covers the sharpening of Marines at the right times to the dimensions of urban combat, to include the moral and physical. It also addresses the small unit leader's actions to support psychologically injured Marines and the importance of values, ethics and morals.

EMERGING CONCEPTS

Send in the Marines is an emerging Marine Corps employment concept to meet the future security environment. It focuses on the demands of the Long War and expands and formalizes the lower end of the expeditionary force spectrum to increase and sustain an expanded forward presence. Built largely around a new Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SC MAGTF), this concept helps address the Navy and Marine Corps challenge to enhance our ability to conduct non-traditional missions while simultaneously remaining capable of traditional naval missions. The concept calls for regularly training and deploying SC MAGTFs in excess of the 3 MEUs that were the norm before Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The SC MAGTFs are mission-tailored maritime forces that will be distributed globally to promote cooperative relationships, prevent and mitigate disruptions, and to contribute to in-depth defense of the homeland. Similar to a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) the SC MAGTF would have firepower capacity commensurate with its requirements to provide

training to less developed military forces. The SC MAGTFs will deploy on a 1:2 deployment to dwell cycle and further dis-aggregate into smaller elements and as required, the Marines of the SC MAGTF will be available for assisting in the development of civil society in ungoverned and under-governed spaces, denying sanctuary to an enemy, conducting operational preparation of the environment, waging ideological warfare, and interdicting terrorists and other irregular enemies.

Marine Corps Advisor is an emerging concept which will significantly enhance the options available to the regional combatant commanders to help meet requirements for building partner capacity. Recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to the recognition that the Marine Corps needs a more robust capability to provide security assistance. This increased capability will be provided through a more formalized and systematic development of Marine Corps advisors.

A Marine Corps Training and Advisor Group (MCTAG) was established in October 2007 to better address staffing and sourcing requirements for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The MCTAG will source the Marine Corps' capability to support advisory requirements and complement the SC MAGTFs. An embryonic capability now, it will eventually grow to constitute a cadre of several hundred trained advisors available to help meet combatant commander's security assistance requirements.

The SC MAGTFs and the MCTAG will provide combatant commanders with more flexible force employment options to augment the traditional capabilities provided by the Marine Corps across a broad array of missions.

The Strategic Corporal concept is about preparing all Marine leaders to handle the full spectrum of missions that they will be expected to tackle in an uncertain world. From large scale amphibious landings to the gritty reality of urban combat to feeding earthquake victims, Marines must be prepared to meet the Nation's challenges when the Nation is least ready. This means we must institutionally prepare the individual Marine to simultaneously provides assistance, de-



velop and train foreign forces, conduct peace operations and ultimately deter/defeat adversaries in open conflict.

Small unit leaders are the key to this success and to this end, the Marine Corps must continue to prepare them both in mind and body. Small unit leaders must be trusted by their leadership, culturally and tactically adaptive, savvy in both customs and languages, technically and tactically proficient, physically hard, capable of meeting ethical and emotional challenges and ready to transition missions quickly. These expectations are not easily met, but they are reasonable, as Marines are meeting these requirements today



around the world. To meet these challenges it is incumbent upon our institutions to increasingly prepare our Marines for the full spectrum of challenges without losing our core competencies at the high end of the spectrum of conflict.